This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

Chess

A Christmas Masque

LOUIS TYLOR

LONDON
T. FISHER UNWIN

BQ/N

CHESS,

A CHRISTMAS MASQUE

Chess

A Christmas Masque

By

LOUIS TYLOR

Do we move ourselves, or are moved by an unseen hand at a game
That pushes us off from the board, and others ever succeed?
TENNYSON.

LONDON
T. FISHER UNWIN
26 PATERNOSTER SQUARE
MDCCCLXXXVIII

APK 8143

The Author reserves all rights of translation and reproduction.

Non creda monna Berta, e ser Martino
Per vedere un furare, altro offerere,
Vedergli dentro al consiglio divino:
Chè quel può surger, e quel può cadere.

Dante: Paradiso xiii. 139.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
THE CHIMES	11
ERIC	13
CHORUS OF CHESSMEN	15
ERIC	16
CHORUS OF CHESSMEN	18
BLACK QUEEN'S BISHOP	19
CAROLLERS	21
ERIC	22
WHITE QUEEN'S KNIGHT	24
BLACK QUEEN'S KNIGHT	28
BLACK KING'S BISHOP	29
WHITE KING'S BISHOP	30
CAROLLERS	35
CHORUS OF CHESSMEN	36
BLACK KING'S CASTLE	38
CHORUS OF BLACK PAWNS	44
CAROLLERS	46

PAGE

WHITE KING'S KNIGHT 47
CHORUS OF WHITE PAWNS 50
BLACK KING'S KNIGHT 52
CAROLLERS 53
WHITE KING'S PAWN 54
WHITE KING'S CASTLE 61
CHORUS OF BLACK PIECES 67
BLACK QUEEN'S CASTLE 68
CAROLLERS 72
CHORUS OF BLACK PIECES 74
BLACK QUEEN 75
CAROLLERS 81
WHITE QUEEN 83
CHORUS OF BLACK PAWNS 86
WHITE QUEEN 87
CHORUS OF BLACK PIECES 90
WHITE QUEEN 92
CHORUS OF CHESSMEN 95
WHITE KING 99
BLACK KING 105
ERIC 109
THE ADVERSARY 110
THE CHIMES 111

PROLOGUE TO THE READER FROM THE AUTHOR.

I know not if 'tis true; but old folks say,
That he who spends the eve of Christmas Day
Alone, and falls asleep 'twixt curfew time
And twelve, and wakes before the midnight chime,
Finds all things that have known the sway of man
Alive, and eager to unroll the plan
Of mortal destiny. Their form he sees,
Their voice he hears as human: should he please
To question them, they speak as those who share
Man's good and evil Fortune. If you care
To think what might befall on such an eve
So spent, peruse this booklet and believe
Though Fancy coloured, from the life I drew:
Grant it a welcome Christmas gift to you.

THE CHIMES.

FIRST QUARTER.

PRAISE the Lord with changeful voices,
Loud and clear when life rejoices,
Low and sweet for death and weeping:
Praise Him ere the hour of sleeping.
Rest is praise: Man trusts God's keeping.

SECOND QUARTER.

Day by day, before the breaking,
Busy brains betimes are waking,
Eager hands are broadcast sowing;
What shall prosper all unknowing.
Failing oft, at last succeeding,
Work is praise: Man owns God's leading.

THIRD QUARTER.

Rises from the troubled city
Discord, mingled shame and pity;
Shame for rest that bears no burden,
Grief for toil that gains no guerdon.
Strife is praise: Man feels God's guiding
Towards a city whose abiding
Knows not rich from poor dividing.

FOURTH QUARTER.

Hark! the happy Christmas greeting,
Sweeter yet for each repeating;
Making holy day of pleasure,
Filling Earth to Heaven's measure.
When for joy in rest from labour
Man seeks solace for his neighbour;
When his work the worker raises,
Peace on Earth shall crown our praises.

CLOCK STRIKES NINE.

ERIC'S STUDY.

ERIC *asleep before a chess-table on which he has been following a Match-game.*

ERIC (*waking*).

A PLEASANT dream. Methought the smooth square board
Grew rugged as the chequered field of life;
My chessmen took a human shape and moved,
The White with purpose good, the Black with ill.
Behind the hosts in serried ranks arrayed
The Powers of Light and Darkness held their place;
And I, half-pleased, half-puzzled, watched the game.
Was never dream so like to waking—Nay!
Not "was," but "is," for see! the living lines
Meet and are broken: now the tide of war
Forms islets, where the vassals cluster round
Baron, or prelate, or castellan bold.
No longer easy to discern the right,
As when the armies front to front opposed

Or judge the issue, when the scope and scheme
Are lost in artful feint and counterfeint.
Here, where a moment Fortune seemed to smile,
The splintered lance and empty saddle tell
Of fallen valour; yet the fall of one,
Perchance may win advantage ground for all.
The clang of battle rises; now it falls,
The day is lost and won, and friends and foes,
Victors and vanquished doff their warlike gear:
And hark! the trumpet-call gives place to song.

CHORUS OF CHESSMEN.

PIECES.

When the play is over, and the match is won,
Times of joyous contest ended, joyous rest begun;
Then the players, foes no longer, only rival friends,
Drink a parting health together; so the evening ends
When the play is over.

PAWNS.

When the work is over, and the reckoning cast
Of the loss and gain the Future herits from the Past;
Then the struggle recommences, all its hungry need
Written in the father's life-blood for the child to read
When the work is over.

CAROLLERS (*without*).

When the life is over, with its good and ill
Fixed for ever, clean or unclean, just or unjust still;
Then the cause of right shall triumph, wrong be put to scorn,
And our King shall come in glory, on that Christmas morn
When the Life is over.

ERIC.

A game within a game; not only Black
Contends with White, as Evil strives with Good;
But lordly Pieces take one view of chess,
And common Pawns another. So with men,
No matter though their cause be right or wrong;
To those whose lot is easy,—wants forestalled,
Ills cured or shielded,—though they bear the load,
They bear it willingly; and that we know
Makes all the difference. To those again
Whose work is forced by stress of daily needs;
Their ever-growing wants cause fresh demands
Till higher culture only makes routine
For mind and body lower slavery.
And yet the right *shall* triumph; step by step
Our God-claimed parentage asserts itself
Till habit turns to instinct, making Man
More human and less natural, and Life
No longer toil or pastime, but a school
Of training for a future where the prize
Is one for conduct. Pity stays the hand
Uplifted, Chivalry becomes a name

For mercy and forbearance, gentle men
Are gentlemen in deed ; and now the game
Is not the one we see upon the board :
Though strong and subtle players bear the palm,
Though strategy and courage win the crown,
Not this the battle nor the end of life,
Not this the victory that heralds peace,
The Life and Peace that know not War and Death.

CHORUS OF CHESSMEN.

STROPHE.

Where is the battle? Flame in the sky,
On earth, over sea, as the thunder rolls by,
And Man fiercer than Jove, *aims* his bolts ere they fly:
There is the battle.

ANTISTROPHE.

Where is the battle? Warriors bold
Move at the bidding of counsellors cold;
The oars for the young, but the helm for the old:
There is the battle.

CAROLLERS (*without*).

When the day is over; and the hire is paid,
Think ye not your labour worthless, though the yield delayed.
Toil on Earth gives fruit in Heaven, O ye faint and worn
Who have planted in the vineyard, for the Christmas morn
When the day is over.

BLACK QUEEN'S BISHOP.

'Vineyards and Christmas" seems to me confused;
But all your songsters take poetic license:
And who would look in carols for a nice sense
Of how the gifts of Nature should be used?

Of all men living, poets are most hateful;
I often thank my stars that I'm no poet.
Why say, "You need not tell us that—we know it?"
You really do not know for what I'm grateful.

Off duty, chess itself becomes a mystery:
No more we move—we only think and read,
(The learned praise my treatise on the Creed),
And this is how we know so much of history.

But poets are like economic cooks;
They get ideas so tough that none can chew them,
And then of these they make a hash and stew them
Served up with spice for those that read their books.

Poetry is what a homely English writer
  Called dirt: "the right thing, only in the wrong place."
  In simple prose, a castle is a strong place,
And I, Episcopus; behold my mitre!

Each has his rank, and knows his proper station;
  Pawn, Knight or Castle, Bishop, Consort, King:
  Black *versus* White. Our famous contests bring
Men to look on and learn exercitation.

We move ourselves, and though the King (God bless him!)
  Is somewhat weak, his able Consort leans
  Upon the Church (this ruby was the Queen's),
And so he sways as we discreetly press him.

But in a mess your poet needs must dish up
  Church, fortress, safeguard, overseer, protection,
  Till I forget my hours for slight refection,
And whether I'm a Castle or a Bishop.

And then he rings the philosophic changes
  On "moves and motives," "rules and rulers," till
  Against Authority he sets Free Will,
And private judgment all our plans deranges.

CAROLLERS (*without*).

When the night is over, and the victor's wreath
Faded and forgotten, Love shall conquer Death:
'Tis for gladness, since our Saviour on to earth was born,
That our evergreens betoken Heaven's Christmas morn
When the night is over.

ERIC.

Fit song for Christmastide. My spirit springs
To meet the thought, as leaps the soldier's heart
At sound of the old regimental march;
Springs to fall back: an hundred times have I,
An hundred million times have wiser men
Grappled with this same question: "If the wrong
Must have an ending, why, in God's great name,
Had it beginning?" None can say that wrong
Exists not, for we feel it in ourselves:
It matters not by whose defect it comes,
Another's, or our own; through sheer mistake,
Or crime, or simply through an aimless chance:

The trampled wife, the starving man, the child
Savage or crippled; failure, death, disgrace,
In one word, "evil" makes this world a hell,
Worse if there be no Devil, for the thought
That God *can* help but does not.

Peace! no more:
Too loud thy voice, too high thy tone for man,
Mere potter's clay, complaining of the Hand
That shapes it. Dolls to dolls; this quaint device,
This masque of chessmen, show within a show
Befits me better than "Prometheus bound."
I like the comedy so strangely cast,
Old portraits stepping from their tarnished frames,
To ancient music setting modern words,
Duplicius quoting Cobbett. What it means
I care not; let it pass for what it *is*.
I like the vagueness of the atmosphere;
Christmas without, and All Fools' Day within;
And since at Rome the proper thing to do
Is as the Romans, so I lend myself
To this conceit. Methought yon fair-haired Knight
Played somewhat fiercely with the heavy hilts
Of sword and dagger while the Churchman sneered.
Speak out, Sir Baron, if it please thy will;
And tell me of some stirring feat of arms,
What time that cross of thine could scarce be known
Amidst the deeper red that dyed the ground.

Or stay—

From what the worthy Bishop said,
I gather that you Chessmen disbelieve
In men as aught but pupils in your school;
And when I think how patiently we pore
Over each move, that by a single act,—
One touch, no more,—is settled once for all,
I grant you reason well: at all events
You reason well for Chessmen. So my place
I humbly take as scholar. That which stirred
Our friend the Bishop was the poet's art
Transmuting common dross of worldly rank,
Of worldly motives, strivings for success,
To precious gold of love and sympathy;
And as I said: this change once made, our life
"Is not the game we see upon the board."
Can'st show, Sir Knight, how love's transforming touch
Has turned the ill to good? If such a case
Thou knowest, speak, and Heaven give us grace.

WHITE QUEEN'S KNIGHT.

Sir Hildebrand, the good Knight,
To the Holy Land has gone,
With a following of the Order
Of S. Peter and S. John.

But a year and a day has been counted
Since they crossed the salt sea strand,
And yet none has brought back tidings
Of the good Sir Hildebrand.

The Knights have kept their vigil
Till the dawn of Easter Day,
As of old the two Apostles
Stayed apart to watch and pray.

Now the Order meets in Chapter
At the summons of the bell;
But who gave yon Palmer entrance
With his staff and cockle-shell?

"Ill news, ill news! Sir Prior,
That I bring from Holy Land:
Stiff and stark lie the good Knights,
All, save Sir Hildebrand;

"Him a Soldan holds in durance,
And by spells of false Mahoun,
Tortures fell, and pangs of hunger
Is his spirit broken down.

"He has stooped to beg for mercy,
And has spit upon the Cross,
And this Easter-morn the Soldan
Will bestride him like a horse,

"Ride him thrice around the ramparts
While the Paynim scoff and jeer
At the renegade and coward
Whom ye hold in honour here."

White with horror stands the Prior,
Flush the Knights with crimson shame,
Rising from their seats, they clamour
Vengeance on the traitor's name:

"Cast the coward from amongst us,
Tear the banner from his stall,
Blot his name from out our records,
Rive his scutcheon from the wall."

But the Palmer's tones sonorous
Rise above the angry roar :
"Let the Church pronounce his sentence,
Dooming him for evermore."

Deep acclaims and deeper silence
Show the Palmer counsels well :
To the Altar moves the Prior ;
Calls for candle, book, and bell.

But before the doom is spoken,
Steppeth forth a stalwart Knight,
Known to all, of courage proven,
Bearing scars of many a fight.

Cries : "A boon I crave, Sir Prior ;
Rough and ready is my way ;
With my sword, on foot or horseback
Make I good the words I say.

"Once, alone in press of foemen,
With my life-blood flowing red,
Saw I him you call 'a coward,'
Force his way through quick and dead ;

"And like hammer strokes on anvil
Rang his blows on helm and shield
Till he reached me, and together
Fought we out that bloody field.

"And though all the Palmer sayeth
Be as true as word Divine,
No man scathless calls him 'coward,'
Who has risked his life for mine.

"He who places foul dishonour
On the good Sir Hildebrand,
Let him prove it on my body,
Foot to foot, and hand to hand.

"And not only for my comrade
Will I venture life and limb;
But S. Peter be my witness
That I fight this fight for *him*.

"He who calls the good Knight 'faithless,'
To S. Peter says the word;
For 'tis writ in Holy Gospel
That he thrice denied his Lord.

"He who calls the good Knight 'coward,'
Let the judge S. Peter be,
He whose trusted courage failed him
On the Galilean Sea.

"Let the Palmer name his witness
To do battle for his word;
Here I stand who say: 'he lieth,'
And maintain it by my sword."

On his knees down sinks the Prior,
Falls each Knight on bended knee;
Waiting for a sign from Heaven
On such awful blasphemy.

But no token breaks the silence;
And when downcast eyes are raised,
Lo! the Palmer's place is empty,
So that all start up amazed.

All, except the one who kneeleth
Pale and still as carved in stone:
One by one each Knight departeth,
And the Prior is left alone.

BLACK QUEEN'S BISHOP.

The moral of this risky tale is twofold.
First—Holy Scripture was compiled in Latin
For many reasons; principally, that in
Cases disparaging the shepherds who fold

The flock, the flock should rest content with bliss
Of ignorance; and, second—Church was meant for
Worship, not talking: Anselm would have sent for
That Prior and taught him discipline, I wis.

BLACK QUEEN'S KNIGHT.

A sorry ending; would that I had heard
That challenge! Sword to sword, and hand to hand,

I would have faced the churl who made a mock
At Church and Chivalry. If this your creed,
Sir White-cheek, that a coward may escape,
Because forsooth S. Peter once showed fear,
Who never was a soldier, or at most
But half a Knight—the best half——

BLACK KING'S BISHOP.

Nay, my son,
These things are mysteries: 'tis not for swords,
However keen, to cut the Gordian knot
Which we would fain unravel.

BLACK QUEEN'S KNIGHT.

Still, I hold——

BLACK KING'S BISHOP.

Patience awhile, my son, our brother there,
A wise ecclesiastic, (though our foe,
And slightly touched 'tis whispered with the taint
Of Arius, but this I scarce believe),
Raises his hand, as though intent on speech.

ERIC.

A pretty quarrel between Church and State!
I think that chessmen are as wise as men,
Or men as chessmen; either cap will fit.

WHITE KING'S BISHOP.

The morn has changed to noon; the light
  Has sloped and fallen in the west;
And still the Prior kneels alone,
  With folded hands upon his breast.

The night draws on; the voice of praise
  Rises and falls, but chant and hymn
Pass all unheeded; shadows dark
  Seem darker for the tapers dim;

So, in the Prior's troubled heart
  The spark of faith shows doubts more dread;
Too great the strain! he strives to speak,
  But senseless falls, as fall the dead.

* * * * *

"O, whither is wending yon bare-foot Friar,
  Not old, I ween, though his hair so white,
And feeble his steps, though no word he speaks,
  Nor raises his eyes to the left or right?"

"O, he is a leech of exceeding skill;
Where he tarries, no fever can make its home;
And the Holy Father has heard of his fame,
And therefore his footsteps are turned towards Rome."

"Then why does he linger? No doctor he,
But a scholar, for learning far renowned;
And the Sacred College has sought for his aid
Against a doubt that is gaining ground."

"Not so; such need would not brook delay;
But a Prior sore troubled with doubts within,
Is this pilgrim who journeys on foot to Rome,
That the Holy Father may shrive his sin."

* * * * *

"Sir Porter, there standeth a Friar without,
Without he stands, nor will enter in
Till he hath had speech of the Pope himself,
That the Holy Father may shrive his sin."

"If he needs must speak to the Pope himself
Let him tarry without at the Golden Gate,
Where the Holy Father will rest him awhile
For a breathing-space from the toils of State."

An old, old man is the Pope of Rome;
On a litter they bear him with gentle pace;
When they say that a Friar beseeches shrift,
Not a wrinkle moves on his waxen face.

"And can this be the Pontiff that carries the keys,
Who governs the world by his slightest word?
Oh! a fool I have been for my journey so long,
To tell a tale that will never be heard."

Then a film shoots over the dull grey eye,
Like the flickering tongue of the hooded snake;
And a thin, weak voice like a linnet's that pipes,
Says, "Fools would be fewer if silence spake."

Low louted the Prior, all quaking for fear
Of the man who could fathom his secret thought;
And his tale he told: how a masterful Knight
Had shame on the blessed S. Peter brought.

No change comes over that waxen face
Whose wrinkles deep fold the dull grey eye,
Till the tale is told, and the Prior falls down
On his face, and waiteth. A gentle sigh,

Scarce louder than an infant's, passed
From earth to heaven, the thin lips curled:
The smile serene, the piercing eye
Bespoke the man who rules the world.

"Not for my sake, my brother, but for yours
Bring forth a flagon of the red, red wine,
That this weak flesh may gather strength to speak
The precious promise of the truth Divine."

They bring him a flask of the red, red wine;
The piping treble grows firm and deep,
Like a sea whose tempest so loud and strong
May rise from a ripple that lulls to sleep.

"Oh! hard are the paths that the saints have trod;
Not for us to judge where they slipped or fell;
'What every man is in the sight of God,
He is that,' though claimed by the Powers of Hell.

"In courage and mercy two names are chief
On earth below, as in heaven above,
S. Peter who holdeth the keys in fief,
And with him S. John who does suit for love.

"Nay! sever them not, lest your hearts ye yield
Through trial unventured or hopeless sin;
For courage and love are like sword and shield,
Nor Satan himself through them both may win.

"There is many a record of hard-won fight
That leads men on to persist and dare;
Is there never ensample of fall from right
That would save a sinner from dark despair?

"Ah, God! I, too, who have run the race,
Who have kept the faith when the light grew dark;
Should I e'er have outnumbered the day's disgrace
When I failed to haven S. Peter's bark,

" But for knowledge of this—that to him who dared,
Who dared and failed when the waves waxed wild,
A Hand was outstretched, and a path prepared
O'er the deep, by a Father who helps His child?

" Have I never through weakness denied my Lord,
Yet lived to confess Him, for one sad look
On the sinner so false to his plighted word—
No, *the Saint who followed when all forsook?*

" O children, the strong do not ask our aid,
'Tis the weak who entreat us; my brethren, hear
And teach; that the grace which S. Peter stayed,
Turns shame into honour when Christ is near."

* * * * *

" With an old man's blessing, homewards
Go in peace, but know my son;
He is bravest with S. Peter
Who is loving with S. John."

ERIC.

Gramercy, gentle Bishop and fair Knight;
And yet, methinks, too much old legends lack
The flavour of this present work-day world.
Would that my doubts were phantoms of the past;
But no; they live and fold themselves and sting
Like homely vipers, not like eastern asps,
Those Queen-destroying themes for playwrights' skill.
Why even playwrights have outlived their day;
Men go to see the act, and not the play.

CAROLLERS (*without*).

Eighteen centuries have sped
  Since on earth our Saviour came:
Miracles and signs are dead;
  But our hearts remain the same.

Gone are mighty Kings and Lords,
  Vanished world-wide Empires' fame;
Changed are customs, arts, and words;
  Yet our hearts remain the same.

Idle arms are bows and spears,
  Tilt or tournay but a name;
Present griefs find present tears,
  For our hearts remain the same.

CHORUS OF CHESSMEN.

Only a dream, a show, a fond delusion
Is life, with all its pleasures and its pains;
We Chessmen strive, and at our strife's conclusion
Find nothing worth the winning; naught remains,
Only a dream.

Only a dream; till midnight bells are chiming,
Their brief existence we with mortals share;
What are ideas but heights past human climbing?
Men fail, and call them "castles in the air,"
Only a dream.

Only a dream, yet each one in his keeping
Holds all that gives realities their name;
Hasten; lest he who watches lose his sleeping
Amongst us, and we vanish as we came,
Only a dream.

ERIC.

Nay! but this passes magic: helm and shield,
Armour, and gay caparisons of war
Fade, and give place to less attractive hues,
More deadly weapons; yet methinks the men
Seem braver for their loss of bravery.
Was ever knight more gallant than yon chief,
Whose rank betrays itself by no device
Save that which wins for him the proud salute
Of victors to the vanquished, after years
Of vain attempts to plant an iron heel
On iron wills, and hearts more true than steel?

BLACK KING'S CASTLE.

Praise to the Knight of S. John who shielded his comrade's
dishonour.
Praise to the Bishop who taught that courage is greatest in
mercy.
This is the making of heroes, rugged, delighting in battle;
Yet, when the battle is ended, kindly and gentle as children.
Great is the glory of war, of darkness and lightning begotten,
Lowering lurid and fateful, breaking in thunder of cannon,
Pitiless hailstorm of bullets, furious whirlwind of horsemen.
So bursts the war-cloud without; but fiercer the conflict
within us,
Deep giving answer to deep, re-echoes out-clanging the
trumpet,
Pulses out-throbbing the drum in tumult of passionate
tempest.
Greater the glory of peace; ah! well I remember that
morning:
Morning!—it seemed like a life, as closer and closer en-
twining,

Fold upon fold of the net enclosing our armies beleaguered,
Tightened till way of escape was barred to the pitiful handful
Left of our gallant array, once joyously proud and triumphant.
Then, when prolonging the strife was only a meaningless slaughter,
Knowing the end was at hand, I spake my last word by a herald,
Sueing for peace if it might be. Swift as a horseman could gallop
Answer came back, not in scorn, but greeting of brother to brother.
Honour to courage and strength, but greater the honour to mercy;
Courage and strength could compel, but love led us willingly captive;
Then we surrendered our hearts. And yet, I had cried in my anguish:
"Better a thousandfold death!" but clear rang the challenge of duty:
"Stand, for thy country demands thee. Care for the wives and the children,
Helpless for shedding of blood in fighting where fighting is hopeless;
Care for thy soldiers astray, wide-scattered as having no shepherd;
Care for the least to the last, sad gathering up of the frag-
[ments;

This be thy calling, the sign that honour which waits on the captor
Leaves not the captive bereft, but blesses both victor and vanquished."
Honour! she beckons me now, for fain would I comfort my comrades
Living or dying unknown, no glory to lighten their darkness,
Found on the side of the wrong, injustice for justice mistaking.
Was it so evil, O friends? Behold, we were few against many,
Bent upon freedom, yet heart-sore, loathing the cost of the contest,
Sickness and maiming of heroes, weeping of widow and orphan,
Wasting of homestead and city, hatred in households divided,
Dragons' teeth bearing blood-fruit for devils to tread in the winepress;
Though for these things we kept silent, think ye our hearts were not burning?
Yea, and though bitter our lot, who saw from the very beginning
Nothing but mischief in store, the course of our state-craft misguided,
Leading of blind by the blind, our strife for an evil conclusion;

Yet we remembered the past, the rift in our ancient Dominion,
"Freedom to govern ourselves," the watchword that was as our birthright.
"Right!" what is right but success? Our forefathers ventured rebellion;
Victory gave them their right, redressing the balance of justice;
Fortune of war was the priest that christened revolt "Independence."
"Duty!" its claims were divided; "Country!" but which was our country?
That of the larger idea, the "one out of many united,"
"One," an abstraction sublime, but still at its best an abstraction?
Rather the "one" that we knew, the woods we had roamed in our boyhood,
Orchards and pastures and waters, faces of neighbours and kinsfolk,
All that made sympathy sweet, our home with its loving traditions.
Little of worth were thy sons who failed thee in peril faint-hearted,
Leaving thee, Mother and Queen, a prey to the many-voiced monster;
Ye who condemn us as rebels, find ye no good in our evil?

Surely the Hand that restrained from plucking the tares in the wheatfield,
Planted the wheat in the tares we sowed in our sorrowful spring-time.
See, in the battle of life, how evil and good intermingle:
Many a triumph of right achieved, yet the motive unworthy;
Many a cause of injustice won by consent of the righteous;
Ever a harvest whose wheat is courage and skill and endurance,
Error and weakness the tares men gather in heaps for the burning;
Never a harvest where truth is chosen and error rejected.
No, for He sendeth His rain alike on the just and the unjust;
No, for He maketh His sun to rise on the good and the evil.
See, and be thankful. The reapers pass on through the cornfields rejoicing,
Here and there plucking the ears but leaving the harvest still standing;
Yielding of many offences, merits scarce worthy the gleaning.
Why are the reapers so gladsome? Well for us, comrades, that upwards,
There where the angels are busy, far in the billowy cornfields
Bending with hundred-fold burden, ripens a bountiful increase, [abundance
First-fruits of mercy and love, the wheat in its countless

Needing no tribute of earth save only a handful as earnest;
Earnest, in spite of the tares ungathered, unreckoned, forgiven.
This is our store though we tended evil for good in our blindness.
Courage, my comrades, our hope stands firm on the Infinite Mercy:
Ever the tares and the wheat must ripen together till autumn;
Never the harvest of earth is that which is garnered in heaven.

CHORUS OF BLACK PAWNS.

Cruel the east wind speeding piercing arrows,
Dreary the sunlight chilled with gloomy haze;
Far is the prophecy of brighter days,
Shrivelled the heart; our future fades and narrows:
There is no God.

Well—for our leaders; though they meet reverses
They hold their glory, keep their friends, their past,
Always some help, some shelter from the blast;
We fall, we die—nor prayers avail nor curses:
There is no God.

Good—for the rich who paradise invented;
Here all the prizes fall to rank and state.
Toil for the poor, submission to their fate;
This is their gospel, keeping us contented;
There is no God.

The great are only gracious when they need us ;
Class instincts point us as their future foes.
Not race with race, but rich with poor must close ;
They lose their touch, if once they cease to lead us
There is no God.

For this they train their priests to special pleading,
Fabling a new world to redress the old,
Holding out promises of rainbow gold,
False hopes for ever from our grasp receding :
There is no God.

No God ! when once the hungry peoples waken,
The classes finding life no make-belief,
But as *we* know it, want and pain and grief,
Shall cry the loudest from high places shaken :
"There is no God !"

CAROLLERS (*without*).

Soft breathed the south wind; earth with life was teeming;
Bright sunshine overhead, fairest outward seeming;
Joy flowed so strong and deep, faith and hope were lulled to sleep,
Seeking no morrow.

Chill blew the night-wind deeper darkness bringing,
Dead lay the frozen world:—hark! the angels singing
Glad hymns to welcome morn: "Unto you the Christ is born,"
First-fruit of sorrow.

Still, while earth's pleasures fill our souls with gladness,
God! we forget Thee. Comes a time of sadness;
Then faith and hope and love, from Thy treasure-house above,
Freely we borrow.

WHITE KING'S KNIGHT.

I was coming home from a journey,
A weary journey from town:
'Twas dark ere we came to the junction,
And whistled the signals down.

The scattered lamps in the suburbs
Straightened in lines of light,
And the hum of a busy city
Was borne on the wings of night.

There was "something on before us"
Till our strength of speed was past,
And the engine panted and laboured,
Ere we reached our goal at last.

The train drew up to the platform;
But while we yet steamed along,
I saw a familiar figure
Glide forth from the motley throng.

A moment more, and together
We gossiped, as side by side
The steps of the boy half running
Kept pace with his father's stride.

Never again will that schoolboy
Welcome me home from the train;
And never again will his footsteps
Patter like midsummer rain.

'Twas nothing: why should I tell it?
It solves no problem of life,
Explains not the meaning of evil,
Reveals not the purpose of strife.

These questions must wait for their answer,
(Was ever an answer to doubt?)
Yet I find in that "nothing" a token
That leaves me content without.

My boy, when he hastened to meet me,
Had little thought that the sign
He was giving unsought to his father,
Was bringing me nearer to Mine.

* * * * *

I shall one day come from a journey,
The weary journey of life,
And the night will darken around me
As I shrink from the ceaseless strife.

The light that on earth was scattered
  Will gather more bright and clear,
And a sound as of many waters
  Will murmur that heaven is near.

A few short gasps and endeavours,
  A fruitless labour of breath,
Ere I make an end of my travel,
  And stand on the platform of death.

Yet shall I not tarry unwelcomed;
  For long ere that last dread pain
My boy will have hurried to greet me,
  And I shall have known him again.

If only—ah! what is my token,
  What sign for my Father above,
But this—that I hastened to meet Him
  When He came to my heart in love?

CHORUS OF WHITE PAWNS.

O be joyful in God, all ye lands;
We have seen, we have seen with our eyes
Of the kingdoms to come upon earth,
And the hopes of the children unborn;
Of the times of provision from dearth,
And the granaries brimming with corn
For the many who work with their hands;
That are hid from the great and the wise.

We have quaffed at the fountain of youth
As it sprinkled our foreheads and lips,
(And your plumage, O birds, for ye sing!)
Where it sparkles, unsoiled by the cares
That come thick when subjected it bears
On its bosom the wealth of the ships;
Where men question the clearness of truth,
Heavy-hearted, forgetting life's spring.

We have heard, we have heard with our ears,
And our fathers have told of a past
When the world took its creed from a prayer
Seeking bread for the day and no more;
When the rich forsook ease with their peers,
And the plenty of garner and store,
That the few with the many might share,
And the foremost take place with the last.

It was well that your faith died away,
O ye rich, till it withered like grass.
We have read, we have read, and we know
How the leisure that riches ensure,
How the training and culture of class
Had their use, the foundations to lay
Of a wisdom, whose laws shall endure
When your children their birthright forego.

'Tis not chance that rolls onward the world;
Nor the classes, nor we are its guides,
Yet we see that we grow to our rights
Inch by inch with the growth of the State,
And we trust in the God who provides.
Though the thunderclouds threaten the heights,
Not by *us* shall the lightnings be hurled;
We are strong, we are strong, we can wait.

BLACK KING'S KNIGHT.

And so Reynard bereft of his brush
  Vowed that foxes were better without;
And his brother who hankered for fruit
  Took his oath that the bunches were sour.
Do you think that we value one rush
  What *you* say? We were fools did we doubt
You would take if you could—we dispute
  Not your will, my good friends, but your power.

CAROLLERS (*without*).

It is a winter night with starry sky,
And see! a troop of horsemen riding by.
"What seek ye, friends?" "Oh, we have seen a sign
In heaven, tokening a birth Divine;
And we bring gifts to offer at His shrine."

"God speed ye gentle sirs; but who are ye,
Tall, stalwart swains: what came ye forth to see?"
"Shepherds an't please you; even now a throng
Of angels sang the birth foretold so long;
We go to see the wonder of that song."

"Ye simple shepherds, wherefore leave your fold,
The rich have gone before with gifts and gold:
What can ye offer?" "Gifts of priceless worth;
The angels brought them down from heaven to earth;
Peace and goodwill; we give them for His birth."

WHITE KING'S PAWN.

Friends, I have a tale to tell you: now the world is gay and glad,
I have prospered, but remember always how I once was sad,
Poor and hungry, left deserted, prenticed to a hateful sot,
Cruel, grasping, lazy, brutal: what was bad that he was not?
Leather cutting was his business, there were but himself and me;
That which killed the wife and daughters, drove the sons away to sea.
Well! one day, my master sent me right away to Pentonville:
I must wait and bring the money; two and sixpence was the bill.
So I waited and returning homewards, faint from want of food,
I was passing through an alley close to where old Smithfield stood.

I have tried in vain to trace it; now the place is all pulled
down;
Then it formed a home for labour, in the thick of London
town;
Journeymen and cunning craftsmen, skilled in working steel
and gold;
But the glory of that alley was a shop in which were sold
Little fishes, bright or painted, set around with tiny hooks,
Feathers neatly sorted forming many-coloured picture
books,
Rods and lines and floats and winches, glimpse of heaven
for the boys,
Paradise of unknown summer, city dreams of country joys.
Wretched as I was, the tempting of those treasures made me
stop,
Press my face against the window, count the wonders of that
shop:
All at once the door flew open, and in making room to
pass,
Crash! I ran against a workman carrying a globe of
glass.
I was collared in an instant, hands of iron held me down;
As I struggled, on the pavement rang my greatly-prized
half-crown.
Quick as thought my captor clutched it: "Just what he
would have to pay [way.
For the breakage," and, with curses, off he hurried on his

I was helpless; though the women said it was a burning shame,
Words were nothing, might was strongest, no one knew the stranger's name.
Never could I face my master: forty years have come and gone,
Yet I sometimes wake affrighted for that outcast boy alone.
There I stood; the crowd had scattered, each one to his daily care,
Only I, dry-eyed and silent, brooded on in blank despair.
What I did I know not: pictures burned themselves into my brain,
Unknown forms and places, never was reality so plain.
I can see them now distinctly, then I neither saw nor heard,
For my heart so wildly throbbing, beating like a prisoned bird,
Seeking light and freedom, sinking broken from the crystal wall;
So my spirit sank and left me waiting for the sky to fall.
Was it hours or only minutes till I started with a cry
As the fatal door re-opened, and a laughing boy ran by?
Just my age he seemed, but taller, curly-locked, and slightly made,
And a fishing-rod just purchased, he triumphantly displayed.
Still I spoke not, but imploring raised my eyes to his—and then:

(What is it that gives the signal: "Man must help his fellow-men?")
Schoolboy speech of kindly comfort: "Why, old fellow, what's the row?"
And the torrent burst the flood-gates, nothing could restrain it now.
He had drawn me up a passage, safe enough from sight and reach,
There I told him all my story. Suddenly he checked my speech:
"Just you wait," and off he started: patiently I held my post,
Though so long his footsteps lingered that my hope was almost lost.
Yet some faith I kept—that trial taught me first to trust in God—
And he came, but empty-handed; gone his treasured fishing-rod!
He had given up his pleasure, selling back untasted joy:
In my hand he placed the money: "Keep your pecker up old boy."
Ere I understood, (remember, friend I never knew before),
He was gone beyond recalling, and I saw that face no more
Save in fancy; there I watch him weaving out his web of fate:
Well I read his fortune; haply he may make his country great;

Possibly himself; more likely, he will sow and others reap,
Forfeiting his own preferment, giving what he ought to keep.
Nay, perchance the world may deem him fool, Quixotic in his aim,
One of those whose friends say coldly: "Yes, he has himself to blame."
Let it be so; let his follies, sins it may be, have their say,
Yet one friend shall stand his witness, pleading on the judgment day
For the man whose boyhood rescued one poor wretch in hopeless need,
Making life seem something better than a cry of selfish greed,
More than men can count by figures, treasure neither sold nor bought,
Profit that is worth the having though our projects turn to naught.
When I heard my comrade telling how a scarcely-noticed sign,
By the key of Death deciphered, opened him a door Divine;
All my soul ran forth to meet him for the bitter-sweet of pain,
For the Presence never heeded till we seek our love in vain.
Truths there are, the deepest, strongest, never seen by those whose looks [books,
Take account by pros and contras as a trader keeps his

Giving every act its motive, nay, not one but many springs;
Just as when the twelvemonth closes, patiently the merchant brings
Into focus all the countless issues which the bygone year,
Day by day has raised and settled till he finds his balance clear,
Loss or profit. Very easy, looking back, to trace its cause,
Classifying into sections, formulating into laws.
Even accidents or chances, turning points that make the mind
Take or leave the rails of custom; these are measured or defined.
"Yours was such a chance; the impulse, timely truly for your need,
Weakness, fruit of weakness; spendthrift ancestry had sown that seed,
Easy-going, lazy feeling, hating pain in any form,
Selfishness of sweet sensation liking sunshine more than storm;
Nothing better." Take your answer: "More than for thy gifts of worth
God! I thank Thee that Thou gavest worthlessness like this to earth."
Is it nothing, O my brothers, that a man should like to *give;*
Can we call that food unwholesome which enables us to live?
Is it not a sign that something underlies each act of love,
Deeper than the mind's intention, higher motive from above?

Neither sense nor reason prompts it, other cause is none than this—
That we *will* it, not from purpose, but because we take of His.
Each one has his pride in giving: often when I heard my mates
Cursing social rank and station, praising democratic states;
To myself I smiled and whispered: "All thou hadst thou gavedst me;
I have neither gold nor silver, but I give my heart for thee,
Thee and thine." I know my fellows; none so proud as working-men:
Touch their pride of class for justice, little fear of danger then.
I could say a word in season. Often did I speak and well;
(So at least they said); they listened willingly, as I would tell
How the safest path to progress lay in holding equal hands
Both for rich and poor, in pressing onward moderate demands:
"Are the wealthy blind to justice? prove ye juster than the rich,
Lest both they and you together wallow helpless in the ditch!"
Like draws like, when those above us found our aim was just reform,
Not revolt, half-way they met us; so we stayed the coming storm.

Ye who trace results to causes, fit this truce of class with
class
As you will—to boyish kindness and a broken piece of glass.

WHITE KING'S CASTLE.

Give me your hand, my brother. Forty years
Have changed the face you saw through boyish tears.
Time changes not the heart: like gospel truth
You read my life. A hasty careless youth,
Unselfish for his very heedlessness;
A gentle man; no more, thank God, no less.
Nor yet quite useless since as steel with flint
Our natures meeting struck the first faint glint
That kindled till it raised the sacred flame
Of sympathy—for this I praise His name.

My sympathies were ever with the ranks,
The great unknown. The few win all the thanks
Of king or country. While he lives, the prize
Is destined for the captain; when he dies,
The poet sings his glory. To the mass
Fortune gives niggardly, and records pass
Like loaves, in batches. Yet I never sought
In vain for volunteers; they knew I thought
Of them as persons, giving each his due,
Not classing them, and thus their love I drew.

But ever as I gained increasing power
And high position, darker clouds would lower
  Obscuring heaven till the world seemed nigh
  To unreality. It was not I,
But Fortune helping me that won success.
What were my gifts? A trick of saying: "Yes"
  Delight in giving, joy in pleasant smiles;
  Was I a hypocrite, with subtle wiles
Fishing for men, and throwing shining darts
To tempt their fancies, luring foolish hearts?

Nor I alone, but those who pictured schemes
Past sense and reason, did they cheat with dreams?
  Was sympathy itself an empty sound,
  Sheer superstructure lacking solid ground,
No surer argument for love or hate
Than scarlet to a bull; were "home" and "state"
  Catchwords for ignorance, whereby the few
  Might fool the many; was religion true,
Or immortality a mask for death,
The last delusion for our parting breath;

Was there no God? My heart gave echo back:
"No God." I looked upon the beaten track
  Where fare the many, and I saw the face
  Of one I knew: unmerited disgrace
Had crushed him down to lead a sordid life

Debasing by its littleness; his wife
And children aged before their time by care.
Were there a God would He disdain their prayer,
Leaving them helpless as the hunter's spoil,
Their life one long dull drudgery of toil?

* * * * * *

Say, whence the change that o'er my fortunes passed?
My chariot wheels dragged heavily: at last
They ceased to turn: my boasted gifts were gone;
My plans miscarried; comrades one by one
Proved hostile; mystic writing on the wall
In lurid characters foretold my fall.
I fell, and falling found through fiery flame
Of wrath and fear and pride and hate and shame
A personality before unguessed:
Possessed I was, and yet not self-possessed,

A Devil prompted me beyond control,
Warping my mind and poisoning my soul.
Then I defied him: lo! my frame he rent
Leaving me helpless, hopeless; all intent
Barren, and naught before me, save a fate
Past human bearing. Crushed beneath its weight
I sank, and then, (as drowning men are said
To catch at straws), to one poor tattered shred
Of faith in Him who pierced and bleeding hung,
In blind convulsive agony I clung.

A moment's peace, while Satan held aloof,
And then temptation. 'Twere a certain proof
Of God, (though miracles had ceased), to find
A gracious Presence influencing mind.
"Experto crede"—Let Him help me then,
Granting me favour in the eyes of men
As heretofore; but should He fail my need,
God were a dream, and faith a broken reed:
I wavered, sorely tried,—then sought him out
Whose cruel fate had emphasized my doubt.

Sorrow had crowned him with a sad wan grace,
The majesty of grief; his care-worn face
Brightened and softened as I said my say.
"Time was, my friend, when I was wont to pray
For good that came not; now I simply trust:
We too are Gods though humbled in the dust.
As Gods ourselves we *know* the Heart Divine,
Not sons but strangers they who seek a sign.
He hears as we would hear; as we would give,
No less, He gives: shall Life itself not live?

Our heart is breaking; lo! we lay it bare
Before the Lord; its nakedness is prayer.
Our blindness, weakness, anguish, self-confessed,—
The things themselves, not words,—on Him we rest
As though we knowing could ourselves fulfil

What we unknowing asked. Our own His will,
And we? *Ah, God! Thy glory!* Dare we choose,
(I speak from knowledge), never would we lose
Thy presence. If our cross can make Thee stay
To share it with us—take it not away!

* * * * * *

Himself was with you in that gift of love
You lost when proving: nature's from above
Disdain our trammels. Yet the grace withdrawn
Again he proffers, prompting you to scorn
To tempt the Lord your God, as scorn you do,
Else wherefore here? You hold that friend as true
Who turns not though your witness evil saith;
To trust *against* not *for* the proof is faith."
—I left him, knowing that 'twas not in vain
He suffered: his the sacrament of pain.

ERIC.

And did your fortune change like his of old,
Who patient in affliction found the end
More rich than the beginning; larger herds,
More wealth and fairer sons?—You may not tell?
'Tis better so: each mortal for himself
Must dree his weird; for were a proof vouchsafed
Of present answer to our cry for help,
Then prayer were selfishness; or did we know

For certain that our prayers remain unheard,
Then farewell hope. And yet one subtle point
Arises on the argument. We grant
That miracles are past; the seed once sown
Must bear its fruit: but ever larger grows
The social field where mind directs the course
Of famine, war and pestilence, of trade,
Of fortunes, good or ill, of life itself;
Then granting influence of mind on mind,
Of God and Devil prompting; then our prayers
May have their answer through our fellow-men,
Themselves and we unwitting.

What is this?
Behind yon dark array a sombre cloud
Whence threatening shadows brandish phantom spears,
Goading their victims till they seek their doom,
Urging each other on, and yet not all,
For see! a gallant band has gathered round
The King's Castellan, and a gleam of sun
Lights on them through the storm-cloud. Ha! a flash,
A blast that makes the heavens shake and jar,
Filling the air with wild tumultuous sound,
Evoking spectres from unhallowed ground!

CHORUS OF BLACK PIECES.

Spirits of ill, who have power over mortals,
Holding the keys of the sensuous portals,
Forcing your entrance through vision and feeling,
Working in secret, your presence concealing;
Urging desire through your subtle contrivance,
Turning to sinfulness chance and connivance;
Lives there the man who resists your temptation?
Bring him to ruin, then prove his damnation;
Were he elect, God would show forth His might in him;
Let Him deliver him if He delight in him.

BLACK QUEEN'S CASTLE.

'Twas over, with never a word
Of comfort from kinsman or friend;
It struck to my heart like a sword,
To think that such shame was the end.

Ah! woe for the sin that betrayed,
That slept while my life was aglow,
That woke when faint-hearted I prayed,
And struck with one terrible blow.

Was I better or wiser: who knows?
Moralities change with the years.
I was older, preferring repose
To feverish longings and fears.

It came with a whisper, a glance,
An ominous shake of the head;
Club scandal, the turning askance
That tokens the socially dead.

Then talk became action; the Court
  Was flooded with nameless disgrace:
There was never a devilish thought,
  But they printed its proof on my face.

It passed: though atonement I made,
  An outcast I stood in the land:
For the lines that my likeness pourtrayed,
  Seared deep with their merciless brand.

Then followed the malice of man,
  The enmity won by success;
When each throws a stone where he can,
  And each adds his weight to the press

Till it breaks; and so ruin befell
  My fortune as well as my fame:
I was—no! it were useless to tell
  The lingering wreck of my shame.

And yet in one thing I was blest:
  That she, who was faithful and true,
Had passed with a smile to her rest:
  "To wait," as she whispered, "for you."

Me? a devil more certain of hell,
  For knowing and loving the right
So wisely, and nearly so well
  As wrong, that my darkness seemed light.

Duplicity—that was my curse;
Speaking evil and good in a breath,
Praising better and doing the worse,
Preaching life, when not practising death.

Yet *she* loved me, and yonder she lies
Just there through yon cleft in the tree.
I forgot—'tis my thoughts, not my eyes
That bring back the landscape to me.

On her grave I would rest my last look,
Ere leaving old England for aye;
And I wearily paced towards that nook;
Bent down by the infinite "nay."

It was "never" for her and for me;
No meeting again with my wife,
Though mercy were deep as the sea,
Though Christ had paid death with His life.

No hope: surely nothing could add
A pang to that pitiless thought.
Yes! I felt my arm touched by a lad:
"Please, yer honour, I've just been and bought

"This here flower, for yer allus been kind,
Both you and yer Missus, to Jack,
And I hopes as you'll take it to mind
You of us, as yer not coming back.'

So he left me. I planted that flower,
'Twas a hyacinth, over the grave;
I had said my good-bye; in an hour
I caught my first glimpse of the wave,

And heard its unceasing refrain:
"He was only a half-witted lad,
He'd have cursed me if he had been sane;
He was grateful because he was mad."

'Twas meet that my lost one above
Should shriek amidst measureless joy,
To see her one tribute of love
Was misplaced—by an idiot boy.

CAROLLERS (*without*)

How shall we soothe the fears
Of those whose fairest years
  Are spent in worldliness and toil and strife;
What can we say to prove
That broken scraps of love
  May far outweigh a seeming selfish life;
But this—that Christmas-tide
Counts more in heaven than all the worlds beside?

The earth is but a speck
Lost amidst rise and wreck
  Of countless systems in the heavenly plan.
Though cycles wax and wane,
Infinities remain;
  A drop in ocean is life's rounded span;
Yet boundless Time and Space
  Take all their landmarks from one Day of Grace.

The world is growing old
Through centuries untold
  Of fire and flood and elemental change;
Through ceaseless birth and death,
And breath succeeding breath,
  Each new departure taking wider range;
Yet all its truest worth
Is borrowed from this one ignoble birth.

This then the Angel-psalm,
Despairing thoughts to calm:
  That He,—who gave the multitudes their bread
From unintentioned store,
Yet made the morsels more
  Than erst, although five thousand folk had fed,—
Will keep His sacred tryst,
And bless the fragments that men give for Christ.

CHORUS OF BLACK PIECES.

Beings who hate what is noble of nature,
Dwarfing the gods if ye may to your stature;
Find ye a hero beyond all comparing,
Matchless in planning, unrivalled in daring,
Victory waiting wherever he leadeth,
Honour undying the watchword he heedeth,
Never a thought to entice him from duty;
Strike him unguarded and lure him with beauty.
Send a Delilah with chains and beguilement,
Dragging him down through the sloughs of defilement:
Were there a God, He would guard what is right in him,
Let Him deliver him if He delight in him.

BLACK QUEEN.

They said I was fairest of women though base-born and
mean;
And they thought to win favour by bribes, bringing gifts f
a Queen;
But I knew in my innermost heart I was better than this,
And I longed for the day when the world should be won
with a kiss.
For my life was athirst with the burning of glorious fire,
And my pulses beat fiercely and fast with a boundless
desire;
Yet I waited the time and the man, though I counted the
hours
While the buds slowly swelled till they brake in a snow-
storm of flowers.
Oh, was ever a triumph like mine! that an ignorant child,
A nurse-maid, a pitiful drudge, by her beauty beguiled,

Till the painter who sought an ideal drew life from n
face,
And the turn of my step in the dance was a transport
grace,
And the simplest attire on my form became exquisite art,
And the burden of song when I carolled went straight to t
heart?
So I blossomed, and Fortune and Fame laid their crowns
my feet;
And I dallied with Pleasure and Power: ah! Springtir
was sweet.
But the world was astir with a tempest of glory a
death,
And away, where the South wind awakens white crests wi
its breath,
And the Gaul and the Briton joined battle on ocean a
strand,
And the Pride of the sea challenged place from the Pride
the land;
Where the arms of the Corsican stretched to their outerm
girth;
It was there that the blow must be struck for the lordship
Earth.
It was there, in the court of a King that I met *him*, 1
fate:
Was he all so unlike to the crowd that I thought him
great?

I know only this; he was foremost wherever he moved:
He was born to be victor, and I — was a woman — and loved.
Then my spirit passed forth from my keeping, though sign I made none;
While my passion gained strength day by day from the glory that shone
In the wake of his ship as she bore him through battle and storm,
Till men marvelled, so great was the soul in so fragile a form:
There was none to withstand him in council or match him in fight;
What he willed, that he dared; what he dared, with his sword he made right.
In those days there were heroes; and proudest of all was his name:
But none prouder than I, as my nature caught fire from his flame,
And I gave myself up to his cause, holding treasure as naught,
Nor sparing my labour till princes and peoples were wrought
To his will; and his captains and sailors relied on my aid,
For my might was the girdle of Love, and my words were obeyed.

Then at last came an hour when the fleet ships were check
in the chase
Of the Frenchman, whose doubles and turns ever lengthen
the race,
And baffled the hounds till though staunch they soug
shelter and rest,
But none durst receive them ; and now they had turned fr
their quest,
So sore was their strait, but for me : though man's coura
had failed
To harbour my friends, yet a woman dared all and pr
vailed.
For I played on ambition by hopes, and on weakness l
fears ;
And the heart of my mistress and Queen I besieged with n
tears
Till she yielded and lured from the King what his Coun
forbade,
Friendly help for our fleet ; nor for long was that succo
delayed,
Nor laggard our sails ere our vessels in battle array
Sought the foe in his harbour of vantage and brought him
bay.
And I had my reward when the victor proclaimed that
me,
Most of all was the praise for his gift to the Queen of th
Sea.

And he loved me, and won me, and ever fresh garlands of fame
He wove for my brows till the world seemed too small for my name.

* * * * *

There was bloodshed in oceans; why turn to that one faded stain?
There were widows by thousands; why shrink if one wife loved in vain?
He was mine, mine by right; there are passions too strong for our creeds:
What are one or two husks in a harvest of glorious deeds?
Not mean or ignoble the love that scorned pleasure or ease
Where was honour to win, or a rival disputing the seas.
We were lords of the world, but Love held us as slaves to his might:
Ah! God, how we loved! and for this, though my day turned to night,
My glory to shame, though I fell in a moment of time,
And the reptiles that wallowed and battened in treacherous slime
Set their teeth in my flesh; though men mocked at my hero's bequest,
Leaving me and my child to his country; though shunned as a pest

By those who had fawned at my feet; though the beast in his den
Found more shelter than I, a lone exile, an outcast from men,
Left to die like a dog in a ditch;—yet for all that has been;
I am great—I have lived, I have loved, I have ruled as a Queen.

CAROLLERS (*without*).

The purest name that maiden bears,
The name that Joy with Sorrow shares
Is Mary—"bitter-sweet":
For Mary gave our Saviour birth,
And Mary for His way from earth
Prepared His willing feet;
And through His dying pain,
Another Mary sorrowed with these twain.

Oh! watchers of that blessèd shame,
Fain would we borrow with your name
Your gifts for wife and maid:
Yet Mary,—not that love of thine
So near akin to love Divine
That flesh shrinks back afraid,—
The path thy footsteps trod,
Bespake thee gentlest mother—but of God.

Nor yet thy gratitude we crave,
Fond heart that touch alone could save,
Outcasting devils seven;
We know not how to thank like thee
From Satan's very self set free,
Upsnatched from hell to heaven;
Nor dare we hope for sight
Of those whom we for sepulture have dight.

Less daring, if we turn to thee
Whose homely gift was sympathy,
A quiet, stedfast will;
The "other Mary," else unknown,
Making thy sister's grief thine own;
Such comfort soothes us still,
And best befits the morn
Whereon to share man's sorrow God was born.

WHITE QUEEN.

For comfort of Thy people am I sent,
  I, who myself find comfort most of all
  In helping, though the helping hand so small
A woman's mission and therewith content,
As those whose hearts on ministry are bent;
  Who feed Thy sheep, or failing strength recall
  To mind and body, breaking Fortune's fall,
Or easing Life's too hard arbitrament.
  O sweet companionship where human aid
Meets human need! your witness shews how near
  Is Love divine whose skill not only mends,
But turns defects to uses. So 'tis said:
  That crystals cut to make dim eyesight clear,
Gave the far vision that through space extends.

Sorrow and sickness ask especial care,
  Tender entreating, softer touch or speech,
  Than fits this rugged work-day world, where each
Is only one of many trained to bear
The brunt of Life's unceasing waste and wear:
  Naught save endurance, and the larger reach
  Of contests hardly won, can fitly teach
The hand to conquer and the heart to dare.
  Happy their lot who prosper—yet 'tis writ:
"Blessed are they that mourn." The starry space
  Is veiled by daylight, countless worlds may roll
Unheeded, when Earth's little lamp is lit:
  So Fortune dims the universe of Grace.—
O day well lost, whose losing saves the soul!

Our sun is source of life and light to men;
  Stars are no more than points to human eyes;
  Pin-pricks on paper picture forth the skies
To watchers of the night. Yet only then
We learn how small our part in "where and when,"
  How proof, opposed to narrow judgment, lies
  In tokens Night vouchsafes, but Day denies,
And Earth unstedfast *turns* to wider ken.
  So, busy men while all goes well are blind
To larger signs that shew Life's little round
  Servant not lord amidst unnumbered spheres:
Only when Fortune's sun has set, we find
  Nature herself to larger natures bound,
And Earth diminishing as Heaven nears.

CHORUS OF BLACK PAWNS.

Strive as we may for our freedom, with threefold scourges they wait,
Seize us and drag us to torture. Fools to have courted our fate,
Knowing and daring the worst for love of some fanciful right:
Now they revenge our rebellion, and none can protect from their might.

Whatsoever a man soweth,
That shall he reap:
Whensoever a man knoweth,
He learns to weep.

Folly! to tell us that troubles with increase of blessings are fraught;
Surely if Patience and Prudence be virtues, why bring them to naught?
Madness! to chatter of purpose when lightnings strike one in a crowd:
Purpose! the curse we were born to, and shaped to the shape of a shroud.

Whatsoever a man soweth,
That shall he reap:
Whensoever a man knoweth,
He learns to weep.

WHITE QUEEN.

"I *will* not; though my soul in swathes is wound
By hands unseen which evil thoughts fulfil;
Else never would I sin against my will,
As sin I do, (my true allegiance drowned,
Steeped in Nepenthe), knowing well the sound
Of hostile challenge, and the meed of ill
For those who yield, yet unresisting still:
Help! in the flames they plunge my body bound!"

* * * * *

The King leapt up affrighted from his throne:
"But three within yon raging gulf were cast,
And lo! another! Come ye forth, O Three."
Then forth they came, no sign of burning shewn
On flesh or garb, for all that fiery blast,
Save perished bonds: the flames had set them free.

The bonds which hold the soul in slumber deep
Are spun of custom's strong and subtle thread:
We heed not Providence, well clothed and fed
From goods in store; no anxious watch we keep
For sudden foe, but eat and drink and sleep,
Munitioned by our skill of hand or head;
Our lips, but not our hearts, ask daily bread;
Shepherds ourselves, we follow not like sheep.
Yet: "Out of Egypt have I called my son"
'Tis writ.—Through long bewilderment of fears
We cross the desert, where no human hand
Availeth aught, that we may lean on One
Whose arm alone through all the waste of years
Can guide us safely to the Promised Land.

Misfortune! so we call it, when the load
  Is forced upon us till the crushing weight
  O'erwhelms us, and we gird at ruthless Fate:
"That ever we should tread so rough a road:"
Yet had some noble purpose been our goad,
  Or conscious discipline for high estate,
  Our pain were lightsome howsoever great,
But not on thralls are laurel wreaths bestowed."
  Misfortune? Nay! no jewel ever placed
On human breast, but pales as tarnished dross,
  By that of the Cyrene compelled to take
Our Saviour's burden. What were lives disgraced
  To us, should Christ hereafter say: "The cross
You bore was Mine; you suffered for My sake."

CHORUS OF BLACK PIECES.

Why should men pine for hereafter when Life is so fair upon earth,
Wise and well ordered by reason, awaiting a man from his birth;
Trial sufficient to train him, but final success for the just;
Never a sign of the future when once he returns to the dust?
Howsoever a man dareth,
He is but breath:
Wheresoever a man fareth,
The end is death.

Who are these that refuse to read, though the letters be graven on rock;
Seeking for grapes upon thistles, good fruit on an alien stock;
Born to misfortune and ruin, sport of the winds and the waves;
Boasting of knowledge and freedom, dying like ignorant slaves?
Howsoever a man dareth,
He is but breath:
Wheresoever a man fareth,
The end is death.

How should a miracle serve them? 'Twere only an increase
of toil;
Moments or minutes of respite before they are bound with
the spoil.
What though by keeping of angels, their feet stood an
hundred times fast?
Scarce were the wonders worth working if lonely they fall
at the last.

Howsoever a man dareth,
He is but breath:
Wheresoever a man fareth,
The end is death.

WHITE QUEEN.

'Tis Life's fair morn: in vain we seek our dead;
The other worlds are hidden from our sight;
How should we see them for the flood of light
Brimming the azure distance overhead?
'Tis Life's dull eve, and gathering clouds are spread
Fold upon fold across the face of night;
What can we see; how hope to read aright
The dark beyond, when once the breath has sped?
Thy triumph, Prince of Earth, with dazzling sun
Or gloomy shade to veil yon gracious Face,
That men should have no other gods but thee,
Lost in time service. See! thy day is done;
The clouds roll back and glittering beacons trace
The Timeless pathways of Eternity.

Through the long night they toiled, but toiled in vain :
  Yet putting forth they plied the heavy oar,
  With patient labour cast the nets once more,
And slowly circling swept the mimic main.
The dragging mesh could scarce withstand the strain,
  As through the deep its burden downward bore :
  But now a struggling, surging, flashing store
Shews near the surface, and they guess their gain :
  Sure, such a prize did never fishers land !
But only think : for all this shoal so great,
  Their creels were bare without the timely word
From yon lone stranger on the shelving strand ;
  And learn that toil wins fortune soon or late.

* * * * *

The loved Disciple said : " It is the Lord."

Nor now nor ever shall we see on earth
The faces loved, no more the voices hear:
Is it sheer fancy that the dead are near,
That angels guide our steps to better worth,
And demons drag us down with baleful mirth?
Could we but touch, but feel some presence here
Other than self, man's brotherhood were dear,
Our life transfigured, and our dying, birth——

* * * * *

An empty tomb, a broken heart, a cry:
"Taken away—I know not where;" but Thou
Wert there to glorify lament to praise:
"Mary!" She turning knew her Master nigh:
Eternal word: "Thou may'st not touch Me now,
That thou may'st *know* Me through the after days."

CHORUS OF CHESSMEN.

STROPHE.

Never the same : the restless tide of being
Ebbs ere its flow is spent ;
Nor ear with hearing, neither eye with seeing,
Lulleth to sweet content ;
No present fancies last ;
Fairer the future, sweeter still the past,
Never the same.

Wisdom is young : time was when Man like Nature
Battled in open strife ;
When cruel hearts and craft and strength of stature
Carried the palm of life.
That time has passed away,
And Mind nor loves nor hates like brutish clay.

Never the same : the fount of dead tradition
Wells from a poisoned spring :
No song divine, when answering contrition
Curses like war-cries ring.
Go ! pen your psalms anew,
But other hands than yours in blood imbrue,
Never the same.

ANTISTROPHE.

Ever the same: one Word throughout the ages,
Deeper than outward forms;
Soundings of ocean, though the tempest rages,
Vexed not by passing storms;
And on that Word we rest,
Our past and future in the present blest,
Ever the same.

Wisdom is old: though arms or bribes succeed not,
Ambush can scarcely fail:
Peace! peace! they cry, and men town-nurtured heed not
Signs of the savage trail.
Think ye the Powers of Ill
Dead, when ye see not how they work their will,
Ever the same?

Ever the same: the Psalmist hurled his thunder,
Warring with evil men:
We see, behind the curtain torn asunder,
Prompters beyond his ken;
And reading through the lines,
Pray for his fall who God and Man maligns,
Ever the same.

STROPHE.

Ever alone : no enemy or neighbour ;
Each for himself must care :
Why should another profit by our labour
Save when he earns his share ?
Why meet in arms a foe ?
Buy him : the wise both love and strife forego,
Ever alone.

Foolish it is to give without receiving,
Sowing and not to reap :
Wise if the lesser gains to others leaving,
More for ourselves we keep :
Surely those hands succeed
Which give when gifts to self-advantage lead,
Ever alone.

Ever alone : in living and in dying,
Careful and calm and strong ;
Curbing our passions, on control relying,
Hoping to prosper long :
Knowing too well to trust ;
For meet life as we may—meet death we must,
Ever alone.

[illegible]

Never alone: one world-wide kin of brothers
Bearing the common load,
Asking no price for kindly deeds to others,
Thankful for help bestowed;
Making no truce with Sin,
Herald of Death, if once to terms it win,
Never alone.

Faith begets faith: as ye shall mete be meted
Care of your fellow-men:
For others work;—*your* work shall be completed;
Your day fulfil, and then
God's peace your souls shall keep,
For so He giveth His beloved sleep.

Never alone: that formless void One only
Traversed with none to guide:
God knew forsakenness, when mocked and lonely,
Scourged and pierced He died;
And by that last black hour
Through Death's dark gate we pass begirt with Power,
Never alone.

WHITE KING.

Our task is done: put by the mimic host;
  Yet stay, O stranger, ere we close the board,
The while I proffer what I value most,
  The fairest treasure from my palace hoard,

The thought that sums the measure of my days.
  "Only a thought," you say, "and this a king!"
Only a king of chessmen, one who plays
  When mortals work; the shadow not the thing.

I dreamed: "How wisely, were I king indeed,
  My hands should turn the subtle reins of State;
Here would I curb, there urge to swifter speed,
  Making my people rich, my kingdom great.

"Yet more, (for Virtue is my chiefest aim),
  How my ensample from its lofty height
Should draw men upwards till my single fame
  Was lost amidst our constellation bright."

A not ignoble dream. You know how long
Unseen, unsought, we chessmen idle lie;
My day-dreams were my heaven. Is it wrong
To snatch a blissful foretaste ere we die?

What are our day-dreams? Poppies for the mind,
Soul anæsthetics, sleepy songs to soothe,
Birds downward gliding, sails before the wind;
A world we make ourselves may well run smooth:

None else its heroes! We the wisest, best;
Our virtue always victor at the last;
Our worth acknowledged, with the added zest
Of conquered prejudice, and perils past.

Could gods do more, or heaven shew more fair?
Ah! fruitless tilling of a barren land!
Time lost while building castles in the air,
Might save our houses from the shifting sand.

False rest unfits us for our daily task
Seeming so mean beside some larger sphere
By Fancy sunlit; there content we bask,
Forgetful of the pressing problem near.

For each, beside the game that all must play,
One special quest can solve, which more than all,
His gifts, his failings fit him to essay;
And whoso shrinks from this neglects his call.

Ah! could we only know and strive and wait,
Each can be best in something; though unseen,
Unwrit, that something makes him truly great;
The step by which a Pawn becomes a Queen.

Unlike yet like is human life to chess:
We play and lose, but mark the losing move;
Future encounters former faults redress;
One game is lost, henceforward we improve.

Not so with Man: his faults he needs must bear,
His and his father's; not for him to claim
A fresh set board, another starting fair:
For life and not for love, he plays the game.

Not always so. In Nature as in Mind
Are times of sleep, of deep refreshing rest,
When evil growths die out or prove more kind,
When shafts miscarried truer aims suggest.

But used by custom to such healing change,
So well attuned to harmonies before,
You weave fresh destinies nor think it strange,
As one by one you drop the threads of yore.

Yet sometimes Life like morning dawns afresh,
Fair and unblemished. See! the tangled cord
No more a Gordian knot; the fatal mesh
Unloosed as though 'twere severed by a sword.

A miracle like this comes home to none,
  Save through experience: we chessmen know
How often when the game is lost and won,
  Our ranks are formed again in serried row,

And you, O stranger, this same wonder face,
  Of Nature raised to Supernature's height,
When goodness through morality you trace,
  And Conscience, through your consciousness of right.

To see yourselves with other people's eyes,
  To feel as others feel is moral force;
Self-knowledge, by whose help you slowly rise
  Step after step in uneventful course.

To see yourselves as human natures seem,
  With all their mingled motives understood,
Is Revelation; consciousness supreme
  Whose touch transfigures evil into good.

A man may batten on unholy things,
  Or thrive on meannesses more vile than sins:
Shew him himself; with loathing back he springs,
  The old life passes and the new begins.

'Tis thus in chess: full well we know its laws,
  All save the one which sets the board again;
That motive owns direct immediate cause,
  Not move by move in long unbroken chain.

'Tis thus in life: though known through every term
The laws of growth, to birth you find no clue;
The miracle which formed the primal germ,
Still shows itself, transforming "old" to "new."

Nature or Supernature? If you play
One game, or one of many, none can guess;
Nor if the fight once lost, so lost must stay,
Or start anew unbiassed as in chess.

The very burden crushing you to earth,
May or may not be turned to counterweight;
Your fear of death become your hope of birth:
"May or may not": nor fixed nor free is Fate.

Here speaks a Personality whose plan
Exceeds your measurement: the straits which part
Sequence from consequence, surpass your span;
The undiscovered country has no chart.

A King myself, though only Piece and Pawn
Obey my bidding; ne'er should my behest
Be known by forecast, or the veil be drawn
From Royal counsels by intrusive test.

Nor fixed nor free is Power supreme: I reign
By law, but over law I law assume.
Think you my clemency is asked in vain,
Or tabled for law-breakers to presume?

The miracle we prove is like to yours ;
An interregnum breaking Nature's reign :
Whilst I am free, the law of chess endures ;
Then lapses till the game begins again.

I solve my problem. To one's self though blind,
Another's eyes may turn the false to true :
For this one evening was my quest designed,
And this the treasure that I give to you :

The thought that something which I cannot prove,
Itself is token of a larger scheme,
A world beyond ; upon these squares I move,
But *there* reality and *here* the dream.

Not we ourselves the chess-board re-array ;
Your destinies are shaped beyond your ken ;
And thus I know that higher Natures play
With us at chequers, as in life with men.

BLACK KING.

Still as of old thou art dreaming,
  Leaving the near for the far;
Losing the truth in its seeming,
  Searching the skies for a star.
Versed in design and decreeing,
  Skilled in fantastic conceit;
Busy with fate and foreseeing,
  Blind to the pit at thy feet.
Miracles! yes, there are plenty,
  Most that is under the sun:
Why should we leave out the twenty,
  Pinning our faith upon one?
"Miracle" only means wonder;
  Name not impossible acts:
There you and I part asunder,

All my belief is in facts,
Things in their rareness or frequence
Classified: hence we have laws
Telling of method and sequence,
Silent of ultimate cause.
All that we learn from their speaking,
Whether as chessmen or men,
Proves not the "why" we are seeking,
Only the "how and the when."
Wherefore to giants men grow not,
Why we should move as we do,
Save that it is so; I know not:
Tell me, O stranger, do you?
Fain would my rival persuade you
"Fortune is proof of a Mind
Ruling the forces that made you:"
Nay! it is you that are blind.
Fortune may ofttimes prove faithless,
Man reason wide of the mark,
Pass through a thousand deaths scathless,
Die from a step in the dark.
This is no wanton exception,
Laws are not broken at will:
Fate is your lack of perception,
Fortune your absence of skill.
Action competes with reaction,
Peace in its turn begets strife:

All you can know but a fraction
  Left from the summing of life.
Yet, had you wisdom to learn it,
  Laws are perfected through change,
Natural when you discern it,
  Wonderful only when strange.
Miracles cease to be wonders
  Once they are matters of course;
Children alone when it thunders,
  Dread supernatural force.
So ends the miracle,—treasured
  (Granting of course it was true),
Only for this, that it measured
  Large by the little men knew.
Folly to beat the bush longer;
  "Miracle" really means lie:
Come, let us see which is stronger,
  You, O my rival, or I.
Surely, if Life be a struggle
  Dwarfed by a larger campaign,
Some supernatural juggle
  Turning man's loss into gain,
Then are your miracles needless,
  Why intervention at all?
Wrestlers of triumph were heedless,
  Gained they a prize by their fall.
Changing the vénue is fencing;

You and I know very well,
Ending keeps touch with commencing,
Trees will be found where they fell.
Miracles graft upon Nature
Something that Nature disproves;
Men adding cubits to stature,
Chessmen extending their moves.
Say, then, if losing or winning,
Ere the last rally is fought,
Since you and I knew beginning,
Was there such miracle wrought?
Only in ancient tradition
Castles move crosswise like Queens,
Captives come back to position,
Phantom defence intervenes.
Dreaming so graceful and pleasant
Fits not with age as with youth;
Where is your sign for the present?
Living, not dead, should be Truth.
All that we ask is some token,
Proof that a Presence is near;
Let but the stillness be broken,
Sunshine or shadow appear.
Surely the Player who moves you,
(If there be Players at all),
Knows that his silence disproves you;
Fails not to answer your call?

No?—not a sign from the distance,
Time then my triumph to claim;
Yield, or else prove your assistance:—

ERIC.

Strangest, where all is strange! The vision fades,
The men are only chessmen after all;
The game, the one I followed on the board,
Just as I left it ere I fell asleep,
Wanting but one more move for Black to win;
Not you, but I, Sir King: I make it—thus.

BLACK KING (*faintly, as from afar*).
"Check! and this gives me the game."

ERIC.

Hard, though in sport, that wrong should conquer right;
Or I should help to lose the day for White,
Thinking that Black would recognize my aid,
Forgetful that delusions when self-made
Defy realities. What did it mean,
The tangled exit of the closing scene;
That vanquished King, his look less sad than proud,
And this with all his service disallowed?
Ah! woe is me who fail at slighter test,
In solemn earnest than this toy in jest:
I see it now—there lies a larger field
Where man may conquer though a chessman yield.
Black reasoned closely: there exists no scheme
Dividing things that are from things that seem.

And yet, and yet,—methinks the floating wrack
Bespoke another world unknown to Black:
But he, Agnostic, bound by what *he* knew,
Ignored the tokens that *we* know are true,
And his the self-same argument forsooth,
Disproving God, that men accept as truth——

THE ADVERSARY.

Vainly they strain at their cords
  Who are bound for the knife;
Idly they plead with their Lords
  For a leasing of life.
A little more keeping of pleasure
  In trouble to end,
A little more heaping of treasure
  For others to spend.
Braggarts, uncertain of aim,
  Overshooting your goal,
Fools who have won me a game,
  And have lost me a soul.
Fallen the masks from your faces:—
  Home!—to your chest,
Silent and dark be your places,
  Senseless your rest.

ERIC.

"Silence and darkness," nay! but speech and light
Through all my days, O friends, from this "good night."

THE CHIMES.

FIRST QUARTER.

LORD, we raise our grateful numbers,
(Softly while the city slumbers),
Blest the want that Thou completest,
Thou who man's shortcoming meetest.
Prayer of all God's gifts is sweetest.

SECOND QUARTER.

Surely, since through Thy decreeing
Increase comes and joy of being,
Prayer is good, but best fulfilling:
Man's the wishing, God's the willing.
Hush! a warning voice is speaking:
"Good the finding, best the seeking."

THIRD QUARTER.

"Ten were cleansed, for one returning:"
Wants supplied, forgot the yearning:
Gates that open wide for wanting,
Close to needle's eye by granting.
Gift there is, more craved for taking,
Fast, the keener for the breaking,
Thirst, the deeper for the slaking.

FOURTH QUARTER.

Grant this thirst and hunger blessèd,
More desired the more possessèd ;
Christmas gift, God-present bringing :
Morn will hear our joy-bells ringing.
Year by year ring in Thy birthday,
Till Thy coming ends our Earth-day :
Thine the thirst, and Thou the river,
One for ever, Gift and Giver.

CLOCK STRIKES TWELVE.

FINIS.

UNWIN BROTHERS, THE GRESHAM PRESS, CHILWORTH AND LONDON.

Stanford University Libraries
3 6105 010 498 447